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ACTION NEA-15

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NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 AID-28 IGA-02
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R 121554Z MAR 71
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2257

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1167

SUBJECT: EMBASSY VIEWS ON LOWENSTEIN-MOOSE REPORT

1. WE HAVE CAREFULLY REVIEWED TEXT OF LOWENSTEIN-MOOSE REPORT, AND WE FIND IT MORE BALANCED DOCUMENT THAN PRESS COVERAGE WOULD INDICATE. OBJECTIONS TO US POLICY DO NOT TOUCH ON FUNDAMENTALS, AND CRITICISM DIRECTED AT EMBASSY LARGELY BASED ON WHAT EMBASSY IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE REPORTED, WHICH IS CONJECTURE ON PART OF LOWENSTEIN AND MOOSE. ON OTHER HAND IT OBVIOUS THROUGHOUT REPORT THAT STAFFDEL LEFT GREECE WITH APPRECIATION FOR FACTS IN THE SITUATION HERE OF WHICH THEY AT FIRST UNAWARE OR SKEPTICAL. THESE FACTS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION AND OUR POLICY TOWARD GREECE.

2. ON OPENING PAGE OF REPORT LOWENSTEIN AND MOOSE ACKNOWLEDGE TURBULENT POLITICAL HISTORY OF GREECE, INCLUDING MORE THAN 40 CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT IN THE PAST 30 YEARS AND 10 MILITARY INTERVENTIONS SINCE 1909. DESPITE THEIR RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE MEANING OF THIS INSTABILITY ON THE GREEK POLITICAL SCENE, THE FACT COMES THROUGH CLEARLY THAT PRESENT REGIME IS NOT UNIQUE EVENT IN GREEK HISTORY. THEY IMPLICITLY ACCEPT THAT REGIME HAS STRONG CONTROL OVER COUNTRY AND THAT FUTURE LIES IN HOW REGIME EVOLVES.

3. WHILE STAFFDEL RECORD THEIR FINDINGS THAT REGIME HAS NOT KEPT ITS PROMISES ON PROGRESS TOWARD FULL CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT, REPORT REVEALS THAT THIS IS

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NOT NECESSARILY SOMETHING ABOUT WHICH USG CAN DO
A GREAT DEAL. THEIR CONCLUSION IS THAT THE TREND TOWARD
CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER IS AT BEST AMBIGUOUS. THEY NOTE THAT
SITUATION NOT BLACK AND WHITE IN SEVERAL AREAS INCLUDING
FREEDOM OF PRESS. THEIR EXAMINATION OF POLITICAL PRISONER
AND TORTURE ISSUES PRODUCED NOTHING SENSATION L.

4. OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE IS REPORT'S CLEAR ACKNOWLEDG-
MENT OF GREECE'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES
AND IMPORTANT FACILITIES WHICH GREECE PROVIDES TO US.
REPORT CONTAINS SUCH STATEMENTS AS "IN A MEDITERRANEAN
INCREASINGLY INHOSPITABLE TO THE UNITED STATES, AND IN WHICH
THERE IS A GROWING SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE, GREECE PROVIDES
AN UNRESTRICTED PORT OF CALL AND SUPPLY FOR THE SIXTH FLEET
AS WELL AS VALUABLE COMMUNICATIONS SITES." WE BELIEVE THAT
MEMBERS OF SFRC AFTER READING FULL REPORT WILL BE STRUCK
BY THE FACT THAT OUR SECURITY INTERESTS HERE ARE OF
PRIMARY IMPORTANCE AND LARGELY DISTINCT FROM QUESTION OF
CONSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS.

5. STATISTICS CITED BY STAFFDEL ON ECONOMIC SITUATION
REFLECT A SOUND AND GROWING ECONOMY. WE HAVE LITTLE
QUARREL WITH THEIR CONCLUSIONS ON SUPPORT ENJOYED BY
REGIME. REPORT FINDS THAT PRESENT GOVERNMENT ENJOYS BROAD
SUPPORT FROM ARMY, CHURCH AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY, INCLUDING
FOREIGN BUSINESS. WHILE MOST INTELLECTUALS AND FORMER
POLITICIANS OPPOSE REGIME, THEY ADMIT INABILITY TO JUDGE
FEELING OF RURAL POPULATION. HOWEVER, THEY LEAVE OPEN
POSSIBILITY THAT RURAL POPULATION MAY SUPPORT GOVERNMENT.

6. FINALLY, STAFFDEL ACKNOWLEDGES THAT POLITICAL OPPONENTS
OF REGIME GENERALLY DO NOT TAKE EXCEPTION TO RESUMPTION OF
FULL MILITARY AID TO GREECE, WHICH THEY CONSIDER NECESSARY
FOR THEIR COUNTRY'S DEFENSE. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS IS A
KEY POINT WHICH COMPLEMENTS OUR OWN POSITION THAT US
MILITARY ASSISTANCE VITAL FOR NATO AND US INTERESTS IN AREA
QUITE APART FROM QUESTION OF GREEK INTERNAL SITUATION. IN
THEIR SUMMARY STAFF DEL STATE THAT "IN THE MILITARY SPHERE
IT WOULD APPEAR THAT OUR DECLARED POLICY OBJECTIVES HAVE
BEEN ACHIEVED." ALL IN ALL WE BELIEVE THAT MEMBERS OF
COMMITTEE AND ANYONE WHO READS REPORT WILL FIND NOTHING
THAT WOULD CALL INTO QUESTION OUR DECISION TO COOPERATE

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WITH PRESENT GREEK GOVERNMENT FOR OUR OWN SECURITY INTERESTS.

7. HAVING CITED THESE POSITIVE POINTS IN REPORT, WE, OF COURSE, ARE WELL AWARE OF NEGATIVE ASPECTS WHICH ARE GENERALLY COVERED IN DEPARTMENT'S 37092 ALREADY SENT TO ALL NATO CAPITALS. UNLESS DEPARTMENT PERCEIVES OBJECTION, REQUEST THAT THIS MESSAGE BE TRANSMITTED ALL NATO CAPITALS. ALSO SUGGEST DEPARTMENT POUCH FULL TEXT OF LOWENSTEIN AND MOOSE REPORT TO NATO CAPITALS FOR USE OF EMBASSY AND USIS IN PROVIDING MEDIA WITH MORE BALANCED VIEW OF REPORT'S CONCLUSIONS. NEWS STORIES HAVE DWELT ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON CRITICAL STATEMENTS OF STAFF DEL, MANY OF WHICH INVOLVE MATTERS OF ONLY SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TO OUR RELATIONS WITH GREECE. GP-3
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